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MEMOIRS

OF THE

L I F E

OF

ELEANOR GWINN.

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ELLENOR GWYNNE

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

H. Gwynn (C)

ELEANOR GWINN,

A Celebrated COURTEZAN,

IN THE

Reign of King CHARLES II.

AND

MISTRESS to that MONARCH,



L O N D O N:

Printed for F. STAMPER, in *Pope's-Head-
Alley, Cornhill.*

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

ELIZABETH

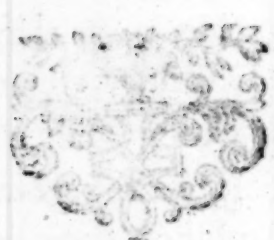
A CORRECTION OF THE
LIFE OF



Reign of King CHARLES II.

AND

Mistress to the Monarch.



LONDON:

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1724.

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THE
L I F E
OF
NELL GWINN.

THE Lives of those who have acted a conspicuous Part on the Theatre of Life, particularly such as have risen from low Stations to shine in Courts, must naturally carry in them a Variety of Incidents, as they could not, but with much Difficulty, surmount the Embarrassments which Malice and Envy continually oppose to a rising Name. As in the World of Ambition there arise an unnumberable Train of Circumstances which Curiosity excites Posterity to know of the Heroes of old; so in the amorous World
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there must likewise intervene betwixt the first Dawning of Beauty, and the complete Conquests which superior Charms make over the Minds of Men, a Variety of Hopes and Fears, Disappointments and Successes, by which the Passions, and the Workings of the human Heart are delineated, and by which the Mind is naturally excited to contemplate itself, and examine into the human Breast with the strictest Scrutiny.

The celebrated Courtezan, the Memoirs of whose Life I am about to disclose from Materials as unexceptionable as the Distance of Time, and the Nature of her Station can be supposed to afford, from ^{the} low ~~the~~ Degree of an Orange Wench, rose to be the Mistress of a Monarch, and dispense the Favours of a Prince with an unsparing Hand.

Eleanor Gwinn was the Daughter of a Tradesman in mean Circumstances, who could afford to bestow but a slender Education upon her, but who took Care to introduce her into as good Company as possible, and early implant in her Mind a great Sense of Virtue and Delicacy, the former of which she was not long in parting with, without the Misfortune of
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losing the latter. She no sooner became conscious of her own Charms, than she solicited her Father to permit her to go into the World under the Protection of a Lady, where she imagined, that her Beauty would soon raise Admirers, and by having an Opportunity of a more unrestrained and free Behaviour, she was not without Hopes of making her Fortune, at the Expence of some amorous Visitor of the Lady, in whose House she was to live as an upper Servant. This Request her Father readily granted, tho' it was not long till he had reason to repent of it. Mr. *Deviel*, a Counsellor at Law*, from whom a celebrated Family now flourishing, is descended, no sooner laid Eyes on *Nell*, than he began to conceive a violent Passion for her, and his Hopes of Success were inflamed from the frequent Opportunities he had of conversing with her, and the Degree of her Station, which he imagined would expose her to the Tempta-

* The Reader is desired to take Notice, that fictitious Names will often be made use of in this Work, to prevent the Imputation of personal Slander, or giving Offence to the Posterity of those with whom our Courtesan is intrigued.

tion of accepting Money, in Price of her Virtue. In this Mr. *Deviel* imagined right; for had his Passion been less violent, and not overcome his Reason, it is probable, that he might soon have triumphed in the Arms of *Nell*, at no very great Expence; but unlucky for him, he made a Declaration of his Passion, and an Attempt on her Virtue much at the same Time. However striking Mr. *Deviel*'s Person might be, whatever the Splendor of his Appearance, *Nell* had not yet conceived any violent Liking to him, nor was disposed to grant him any Favours, but from Motives of Interest: An Attempt therefore, on the Virtue of a Girl, who scarce had Time to swallow the Bait of Flattery, or to be soothed by Tendernefs into Compliance, was not likely to prove successful; *Nell* made a vigorous Resistance, and alarmed the House with her Shrieks, in so terrible a manner, that the Lady, whose Visiter Mr. *Deviel* was, became acquainted with it; and as she herself, being a Widow of upwards of fifty, had a Kindness for Mr. *Deviel*, from that Moment conceived, from Principles of Jealousy, an Aversion to *Nell*,
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and in few Days turned her out of her House.

Nell thus reduced, had nothing but her Virtue to comfort her; she met from her Father with a very cold Reception, for the good Man was made acquainted with the Story by the Lady herself, who told him, that his Daughter was already debauched, and that she owed her Ruin to her own Vanity; that her Fondness of herself, and her inordinate Pride, blown up by a Consciousness of some little Beauty, made the Girl quite distracted, and strenuously advised him to send *Nell* into the Country, to wean her from Flattery, and cure her of Self-conceit; and for this Purpose she put ten Guineas into his Hand. The Conduct of this Lady shews what cruel Injustice they, who are Rivals, are capable of inflicting on one another; for, the Obscurity of *Nell's* Birth, and the Indigence of her Circumstances, could not protect her from this Lady's Persecution, who saw no other Fault in her but her Beauty. Her Father was obstinate, and threatened to abandon *Nell* for ever, if she did not consent to go into *Yorkshire* and live with her

Aunt,

Aunt, who was the Wife of a Parish-Clerk, and a Woman, who, as she had never seen *London*, was not likely to fill her Head with Vanity, or teach her any thing but Country Oeconomy. *Nell* heard this Proposal with ineffable Contempt, she'd seen enough of Life to make her fond of the Town; and though she was then in the full Possession of her Virtue, she began to entertain some Thoughts of yielding it, rather than to be sent to the Country, to live in Obscurity, and contract rustic Habits, by which she would lose all Power of pleasing for ever; but how to yield it with a good Grace, or make it turn out to her Emolument, was with *Nell* a Matter of serious Consideration. She had observed how gayly many Ladies lived, who had no other Means of supporting their Grandeur, but by making such Concessions to Men of Fortune, and stipulating such Terms as both of them could well afford to comply with; and as she was sensible that many succeeded upon the Town with half her Accomplishments, she began to despise all Thoughts of going into the Country; and told her Father, that he might abandon

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don her, if he pleased, but she, for her Part, was firmly resolved never to abandon the Town. In this Delimma she cast her Eye upon the Stage, and as her Person was admirably calculated to inspire Passion, she imagined, if she was arrayed in the Pomp of Tragedy Heroines, her Figure alone, without any theatrical Requisites, would make her pass upon the Town, or, at least, if she could not wear the Buskin with Success, she could see no Objection to her appearing as a Lady in waiting, or one of the Maids of the Bedchamber to the Queens of the Stage. This Thought filled her with Rapture; Lovers, Fame, Pleasure and Gallantry crowded on her Fancy; she soon became a Queen in Imagination, though she never once dreamed of becoming in reality, if not a Queen, a least the Mistress of a Monarch, and being filled with that Kind of Royalty, which is more substantial than a two Hours Glitter on the Stage.

Warm with these Expectations, she conceived one of the boldest Schemes a Girl of her Education could possibly imagine. She left her Father's House, took a private Lodging genteely furnished, and, as her
Appearance

Appearance was elegant, she passed for a young Lady just come from the Country : In this Retirement she applied herself to reading Plays, and having a little Money, which the Lady she lived with allowed as Wages, and ten Guineas which Mr. *Deviel* had made her a Present of in Hopes of her future Favours, she went very often to the Play, and took in as many Ideas of theatrical Action as she could possibly treasure in her Mind. After living a Month or two in this Manner, she wrote a Letter to Mr. *Betterton*, inviting him to her Lodgings, to whom she disclosed her Scheme of coming on the Stage, and desired he might give his Opinion of her Powers in Recitation. He told her plainly, that she was not then fit for the Stage, though she seemed to have a Genius that way, and advised her to prosecute some other Scheme of Livelihood. Unlucky for Miss *Gwinh*, Mr. *Betterton* was not amorous, or at least, conceived no Passion for her, for she was in Hopes of operating upon the Mannagers by her Face and Person, as well as her Voice and Action. Her Scheme being so far defeated, and her Money diminishing apace, she began

gan to be alarmed lest Poverty should overtake her, and in Place of bringing her Virginity to a good Market, she should be obliged to turn Prostitute for Bread ; and that too, without any Prospects of Advantage, or rising in the World ; for she was born, not more with a Love of Pleasure, than of Distinction. In this Dilemma she quitted her gay Apartments, and rigged herself in the Habit of those Girls who attend the Playhouse, and sell Oranges : However wild this Project may seem to the generality of Readers, I know not, if it was possible to conceive a more likely way of introducing herself into the World.

Nell was abundantly conscious of her own Charms, and as Beauty in low Stations is apt to strike more, on Account of its centring in a Person, on whom Fortune has bestowed no Advantages, as every one who contemplates it, immediately conceives Hopes of Possession ; so, by these Means, the Object becomes, at least, more popular, and receives a greater Number of proffessed Gallants. Beauty in high Life may charm, but at the same time it awes ; while Beauty in low Life charms and invites : This

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proved *Nell's* Case exactly ; no sooner had she appeared in the Pit and behind the Scenes with her Oranges, than the Eyes of the Players, and those sparkish Gentlemen who frequent the Theatres were fixed upon her, all anxious to know the Story, and Birth of the handsome Orange Wench. Mr. *Betterton*, who soon knew her in her Disguise, seemed astonished at her Resolution, and began to form great Expectations from one, whose Propensity to the Stage was so violent as to excite her to appear in so low a Character, for the Sake of acquiring Instruction : He advised her to continue her Manner of Life for some time, and appointed one of his Subalterns to pay her frequent Visits, and initiate her in the Principles of playing. This Subaltern was himself a promising Genius, he had made a rapid Progress on the Stage, and was held in Esteem, not only for his present Accomplishments, but for the Attainments he was likely soon to be Master of : He was of a Constitution sanguine and amorous, he felt the Passions he represented ; and as Love is inseparable from a Heart capable of tender Sensations, so it is not to be doubted,

doubted, but he made some Advances to *Nell*, and some Proposals, with which, if she complied, she would have an Opportunity of relishing those overwhelming Transports, which Poets have displayed with such lavish Descriptions, and Players have uttered in all the Extasy of fainting Lovers.

Nell heard his Proposals without Resentment, for she wished for nothing so much as an Occasion of charming one who could, by any Means, assist her in theatrical Improvements.

The Player was transported with the Hopes of possessing *Nell*; and as he was really in Love, he may be supposed to have uttered his amorous Parts to her with more than ordinary Languishment, and have filled her Bosom with the most delicate and tender Sensibility. He prevailed upon her to quit her Profession of Orange-selling; and though Players then did not attain to so high a Pinnacle of Wealth as in modern Times, yet he offered to share his Salary with her, and to live with her with that Constancy and Freedom which a Husband is bound in Honour to live with his Wife.

In this pleasing Tranquility, for some time, did the theatrical Lovers enjoy themselves. The Player had no greater Pleasure than in instructing and pleasing her, and she no higher Felicity than in receiving Instruction and Addresses of Passion. As yet she had not yielded, for some time must be spent in Courtship, in the Inquietudes of Love, in vowing and sighing, before even the most amorous Female can be wheedled out of her Chastity; and indeed the Difficulty of conquering is more than repaid, by the Overflow of Joy which Fruition yields to delicate Inamorata's. There is something wonderfully delightful in the Contemplation of past Hardships; He who has long groaned under the Frowns and Persecutions of Fortune, has a tenfold Relish of the Pleasures of Competence; and the General, who after a long Siege, enters the City, contemplates both the City and Inhabitants, who bravely defended it, with double Veneration. As it holds in civil and military Life, so it holds in Love; the many amorous Struggles, the waking Nights, the tormenting Dreams, the Solitudes and Fears, rush into the Imagination,

tion, and when dissipated by the Prospect of immediate Enjoyment, leave a Serenity behind, which a Lover only knows while he sinks into the Arms of his Mistress with heightened Appetites, and revels there with inexpressible Transports. Such like Pleasures seemed to be waiting for Miss *Gwinn* and her Lover; but unluckily for him, a Spoiler intervened, and snatched from his whetted Appetite the Fruits he had been so long preparing to taste. The Virginity of *Nell* was destined to another, and he who least deserved the Favour, by Violence snatched it from her.—One Day, when she was seeing her Lover perform the Part on the Stage, in which he most succeeded, *Creon*, in *Dryden's Oedipus*, a Gentleman stepped into the same Box, in all the Splendor of a consummate Beau, and gently whispered a Compliment in her Ear; she was not long in recollecting her old Acquaintance *Deviel*, and as she could not be ignorant of his Scheme, and the Purpose of his coming, she behaved with Reserve and Coldness; she appeared quite engaged with the Play, and heard his Protestations with that Indifference that we naturally hear

hear Compliments from those we hate, or of whose Judgment we have no Opinion. Mr. *Deviel* was too well acquainted in the Ways of Womankind to be much discouraged by this Reserve; his Scheme was already formed, and he was resolved, at all Hazards, to carry it into Execution: He pressed her to take an Airing with him in his Chariot, which she absolutely refused, but he found Means, the Moment she stepped out of the Playhouse, to have her taken hold of by Persons hired on purpose, and before she had Leisure to reflect on the Insult, and recover the Perturbation of her Spirits, she found herself half way at *Richmond*, attended with Mr. *Deviel*, who was earnestly pressing her Hand, and looking the Language of ineffable Passion.

She began now to think of his Treachery with Resentment, she reproached him for this, as well as his former Behaviour; and Gratitude to the Player, who had so patiently waited for the Flower, which he was about to pluck by Force, armed her Fury, and furnished her Tongue with sharp Investives; *Deviel*, heedless of her Clamours, drove to *Richmond*, and placed her

her safe in the House of Mrs. *Creswold*, a Lady, who is celebrated by the Wits of those Times for assisting young Gentlemen in the Affairs of Love, and is particularly mentioned in one of *Otway's* Epilogues.

This old superannuated Courtezan was resident during the Winter-season in Town, and during the Summer, she retired into the Country, to provide commodious Reception for the Right Honourables, who were her Customers, for whose Sake she kept a very wide Intelligence over all *England*, and by her Spies and Emissaries, got Account of every rising Beauty, for whose Virtue Mrs. *Creswold* never failed to lay Snares. In short, she was in the luxurious Reign of *Charles* the II^d, what Mother *D——* is in our refined, and still more licentious Generation. *Nell* had Penetration enough to foresee the Event of this Usage; and doubted not, but few a Hours would produce her Ruin, and that the Sun would soon set on her Virginity, to rise again no more. As she dreaded, so it fell out; *Deviell*, who, during the whole Evening, pressed her with Compliments, with Protestations and Flattery; at last

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told her, that he hoped she would be reconciled to her Fate, for that Night he was resolved to possess her in Spite of all the Resistance she was capable of making. Upon hearing this, a Woman, in whose Heart Virtue had taken a firm Root, and who sees nothing so dreadful as Loss of her Innocence, would have fainted away, *Nell* was not discomposed to any extraordinary Degree; she did not indeed love *Deviel*, and would much rather have consecrated her ultimate Favour to another, but then she saw nothing terrible in the Event; for such is the Difference betwixt those who are chaste from Principles of Honour, and those who are chaste for Convenience, from Pride or Ambition. *Deviel* that Night lay in the Arms of Miss *Gwinn*, and not satisfied with blasting the Flower of Chastity, and revelling one Night in the Extasy of a luscious Banquet; he continued at Mrs. *Creswold's* near a Fortnight, in the stated Repetition of the same Joys. During the Absence of Miss *Gwinn*, the Reader, who has been in Love, may imagine the Distraction of the Player's Mind; he was plunged in the fiery Lake
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of Jealousy, that tormenting Fury took Possession of his Soul, tore his Bosom to Pieces, prey'd on his Vitals, and sunk him in inexpressible Wretchedness; for sure there is no Pain on Earth so emblematical of those Racks which divine Vengeance has decreed to fall upon the Guilty in another Life, than this unsufferable, this overwhelming Anguish. He observed that Miss had dress'd herself that Day with unusual Gaiety, he saw the Lover enter the Box, every thing conspired to confirm him in her Revolt; and tho' he loved her with the most doating Fondness, his Rage pour'd a thousand Curses on her Head, and those Hands with which he had so oft clasped her Waist, and press'd her Bosom with all the Thrillings of Desire, would have now tore her false Heart out, and deformed that enchanting Face, which had bewitched him to his undoing.

Time and Absence, the sovereign Balms of Love, at last produced some Serenity in this Lover's Breast; he began to despise his Mistress, as a Strumpet, tho' he could not help adoring her as a Woman.

Half a Year elapsed before Miss *Gwinn* made a public Figure again in the World,

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and she began likewise to forget her former Tenderness for the Player; for such it seems is the Heart of Woman, that a Variety of Lovers bewilders her Affections, and she can fix them no where while she is a Slave to Admiration. During this Recess from publick Life, it is reasonable to suppose, that *Nell* was under the Protection of *Deviel*, who, as he indulged her Pride with extravagant Gaieties, and as he could supply every other Want, it may be supposed he began to shew her Affection to a greater Degree than he had formerly done.

Whether by the Interposition of *Deviel*, or by what other Means is unknown, but *Nell* next Season made her Entry upon the Stage, with very great Eclat, not so much as a fine Actress, as a fine Woman. Tho' she certainly had a violent Passion for the Stage, yet by her Success, there we naturally discern the great Difference there sometimes is betwixt Propensity and Genius.

A Player, like a Poet, must be born, and tho' no Man in the full Exercise of his Reason, can set the Excellencies of Poetry and Playing upon an equal Footing; yet it never was known, that a Player more than a Poet

could be formed. He must be born with great Advantages from Nature; he must have a Heart capable of strong Feeling, a happy Elocution, a Dignity of Person, and no inconsiderable Compass of Understanding to display the different Passions which agitate the Soul of Man, and throw a proper Gracefulness into the whole of his Deportment.

Miss *Gwinn* never was remarkable for a fine Actress; her great Power lay in speaking an Epilogue, and exposing any Characters of Vanity, with a striking Air of Coquetishness and Levity.

When *Nell* appeared on the Theatre at *Dorset-Garden*, her old Lover betook himself to the other House; he had wrought up his Mind to an Indifference about her, and called in his Pride to help him to despise her. —To what Wretchedness would Man be exposed, if one Passion did not succeed another? the most ardent and sincere Lover may be so used by the Insolence of his Mistress, as not to be capable of containing his Resentment. Love is of a reciprocal Nature; it demands Returns of Fondness, and

no one can love the Woman long whom he has Reason to believe despises his Addressees.

Tho' Miss *Gwinn* had no Contempt for her old Lover, yet she maintained an Indifference, which, on his Side, was naturally enough construed into Ingratitude and Neglect. It was not long 'till Mr. *Deviel* began to feel, to his Experience, that Constancy is no more to be expected in a Mistress, than good Sense in a Fop; for tho' it is said, that there is no Rule without Exception, yet to this, I believe, few can be pleaded.

Lord *Rupert*, one of the most gallant Noblemen of the Age in which he lived, fell desperately in Love with Miss *Gwinn*, and as his Fortune was great, his Person striking, and his Address bewitching, she began to see no Excellencies in *Deviel*, and to transfer his fine Qualities into the Person of Lord *Rupert*; the inconstant Coquet soon made such Concessions to *Rupert*, that he was convinced he need only press hard, and carry the Prize. There is not perhaps one Passion in the human Soul, that rouses the Principles of Action to so violent a Degree as Love. *Rupert* was naturally indolent, heedless,

heedless, and voluptuous: He had from Nature shining Powers, such as might have steer'd the Helm of Government, and conducted a reeling State; but these were suffered to languish in Inactivity, while his Time glided away in a kind of sluggish Repose: But no sooner did a Mistress intervene than he was all Soul and Fire; he dangled after her, formed Schemes, defeated Opposition, and triumphed at last.

Lord *Rupert* for some time lived in the peaceful Possession of *Nell*, 'till another unlucky Amour put an End to it for ever.

The Earl of *Meredith*, his Lordship's Friend, with whom he had lived in the strictest Intimacy, much about that Time married a beautiful young Lady of a distinguished Family, but without Fortune. Lord *Rupert* made frequent Visits at his House, and their Friendship seemed every Day to be gaining Strength; nor did Earl *Meredith* neglect paying Visits at Lord *Rupert*'s, where he had frequent Opportunities of conversing with Miss *Gwinn*, who had a peculiar Talent at rendering her Conversation entertaining: She was naturally sprightly; she inherited a great deal of Wit
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and good Sense; and had great Promptitude at Repartees. She, in short, charmed Earl *Meredith* so much, that he was resolved to make Trial of his Skill, and lay Siege to his Friend's Mistress.

This Resolution however unjustifiable, yet was Virtue in a high Degree compared to the Resolution which *Rupert* took of attempting the Countess of *Meredith*; this Lady, tho' not so witty, yet had more Dignity in her Person, and more commanding Charms, than Miss *Gwinn*; she was innocent and artless; she was formed for Love, not for Intrigue; and without any Design to captivate, was capable of conferring the firmest Chains a Lover can possibly wear.

Lord *Rupert* saw how fond his Friend was of Miss *Gwinn*, and by giving him frequent Opportunities of being alone with her, he removed all Suspicions of Jealousy, and entered with great Warmth on his Scheme of Treachery. Tho' it cannot be deny'd, that betwixt these two Noblemen a strict Friendship subsisted, yet how slender is the Bond of Friendship when Love is a Party? and he who at another Time would have sacrificed his Life and Fortune for his Friend

Friend, was now assiduous to injure him in the most tender Point, to introduce Bastardy into his Family, and basely dishonour his Bed. How violent must that Passion be, that can thus surmount Remorse, and bid Defiance to all Principles of Honour! But strange as it seems, every Day's Experience demonstrates the Truth of it; and he who has the Happiness to possess a beautiful Wife, should be extremely cautious who he admits into Friendship, or trust the Charmer of his Soul with such of his amorous Companions, as Regard for him, he imagines, will deter from making any Declarations of Love.

The Intimacy betwixt Lord *Rupert* and the Countess encreased; for she found herself neglected by Earl *Meredith*, who dedicated most of his Time to his new Favourite; and, without any dishonourable Intentions, she found her Heart steal from her, and give itself, by slow Degrees, to *Rupert*.

There is nothing a Wife can so ill bear as Neglect in a Husband; it rouses her Indignation, and often provokes to that Inconstancy which no other Consideration could have excited her to. This almost proved the
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Case of the Countess; for had not a Discovery been made, in all Probability *Rupert* would have triumphed in his Friend's Disgrace.

A Letter was one Day sent by *Rupert* to the Countess, inviting her to appear at the Ring, and insisted more peremptorily on her complying, as he assured her, that Earl *Meredith* was to spend that Evening in Company from whom he would not be soon disengaged; and concluded his Letter so much in the Strain of a Lover, that a Husband, tho' not much subject to Jealousy, could not help being alarmed, and bestirring himself a little in honour of his Bed. This Letter fortunately fell into the Hands of Earl *Meredith*, who, conscious of his own Behaviour to his Lady, discovered no Resentment to her, but hurried to *Rupert* to upbraid him for his Treachery, and to invite him to the Field of Honour to clear himself of the Imputation of a Villain. *Rupert* heard this without much Emotion, and turned the Confusion again upon *Meredith*, for supplanting him in his Mistress's Esteem. *Meredith* produced the Letter sent to his Lady, against which *Rupert* produced twenty of his sent to Miss Gwinn, and insisted upon
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it, that he deserved this Treachery for neglecting so fine a Lady whom he had but lately made his Wife, and giving up his Affections to one from whom no Constancy could be expected. *Meredith*, upon hearing this, was deeply affected; he forgave his Rival, and earnestly set about recovering the Affection of his own Lady, which by Coldness and Neglect on his Side, was pretty much weaned from him.

Tho' the Affair betwixt Lord *Rupert* with Earl *Meredith* was thus amicably decided, yet it was not altogether without some Disadvantage to Miss *Gwinn's* Interest; for Lord *Rupert*, who had long been sated with that Species of Enjoyment, behaved to her with Reserve and Coldness, sufficient to indicate a total Alienation of his Affections; and when the Consideration of her Inconstancy was taken in, he was disposed to relinquish his Mistress, and leave her to the Chances of the World; nor was he long without carrying his Resolution into Execution.

One Day after they had dined privately together, and indulged the usual Freedoms which a luxurious Meal excites, he took

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Occasion to tell her, that possibly that would be the last Time he should ever be so happy to possess her; for he had resolved to alter his Scheme of Living, to commence Oeconomist, and marry.

This Declaration did not much affect Miss *Gwinn*, for she had Penetration enough to discern his Coldness, and doubted not but one Day or other a Separation would ensue. Well, my Lord, says she, I am no Stranger to the Heart of Man; I know when Appetite is cloy'd, no Principles are left to excite Constancy; and with Men of your Lordship's Complexion, the Motive of Esteem has seldom any Weight. I flatter myself, I can never incur your ~~Con-~~ Contempt; for my Vanity whispers, that there are many less intellectual Mistresses; but I am above reproaching you; for as in your Conduct there is no Perfidy, so on my part there shall be no Reflections: Your Lordship may rove for a new Mistress, and pardon me, if I tell you, that my Love for your Lordship was never so very violent; but a few Weeks will obliterate all Traces of it, and a Bond of Oblivion may pass betwixt us.

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This indifferent Behaviour not a little nettled *Rupert*; for few Men are so exempt from Vanity, but they imagine their Persons, Fortunes, or Understandings, have a Claim upon the Esteem of the Ladies, especially that Sort of them who condescend first to grant Favours, and then to be supported upon the Bounty of their Gallants.

Rupert was overcome by Indifference, and wrought up to a Resolution, which no Tears nor Tenderness could have affected.

Upon this Declaration had Miss *Gwinn* fainted away, and, in the Accents of Despair, bemoaned her unfortunate Story; *Rupert*, who would have construed it as a Compliment to his Person and Qualifications, would have stood perhaps unmoved; but, when his Pride was touched, and his Vanity alarmed, he began to be sorry that he had thus abruptly discarded her, without having the Pleasure of one parting Sigh. He made Proposals of Accommodation, and entreated Miss *Gwinn* not to leave him, or think of any other Way of Life than her present.

The Sagacity of the celebrated Courtezan soon suggested to her, that accepting his

Offer was the most ready Way to mortify him, and indulge her own Pride at his Expence: For no sooner should another Lover present himself, than she resolved, with flying Colours, to leave him, and secretly deride him for the Oddity of his Humour and fantastical Resolution,

She had not lived long without an Opportunity; for the gallant Earl *Wilmot*, whose Writings are well known to the dissolute Part of the World, and which have diffused their Poison thro' all Ranks of Life, soon came in her Way, and without much Ceremony, made Offer of his Heart. This Lord, who, of all the amorous Characters of this luxurious Reign, was the most abandoned to Pleasure, was assiduous to find out new Mistresses; he lived but for Gratification, and tho' he was too libidinous to have much Delicacy in his Possession, and too much a Libertine to be awed by any other Consideration, yet with the Advantage of Wit and Fortune, he found Means to decoy more young Hearts, and wheedle Virtue from more Girls, than any other Personage in that courtly *Æra*. The Man-
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ner of his getting Acquaintance with *Nell Gwinn* is somewhat particular.

One Day he saw her at the Ring, in Company with Lord *Rupert*, and began to admire her the Moment he saw her. He bribed Lord *Rupert's* Footman to give an Account of the particular Conditions on which she lived with his Master; the Manner of his first procuring her; her Temper and Inclination; and particularly how she stood affected to Love and Pleasure. This Intelligence being procured, he set about introducing himself to her Acquaintance. In this Particular he was a little embarrassed; for there was always a Reserve betwixt him and Lord *Rupert*.

Wilmot, tho' a Wit, was a malicious vindicative Man; he could not bear a Rival in any thing; and, as he had a good Fortune, he never failed to prosecute his Resentment with the utmost Rigour.

Rupert had taken under his Protection and Patronage one of the greatest Genius's that ever was in the World, and unexcepti-
onably the Monarch of Wit in his own Age. This great Poet had incurred the Displeasure of *Wilmot*, on no other account
than

than the Superiority of his Abilities, and the Success of his theatrical Pieces; which, tho' always opposed by a Club of Snarlers of an opposite Faction, yet broke thro' the most forcible Resistance, and have descended to Posterity with the utmost Eclat. This was the Reason why *Rupert* and *Wilmot* were no great Friends; for as *Rupert* loved and honoured *Dryden*, he could expect nothing but Opposition from a Man who dreaded and hated him as a Rival.

When it is considered how vast is the Disproportion betwixt the Genius of this Nobleman and this illustrious Poet, it required great Vanity in him so much as to think of himself at the same time with any Degree of Approbation, when compared with *Dryden*. There are indeed in *Wilmot's* Works very fine Sallies of Fancy, a good deal of Wit, a tolerable Share of Satire, and Harmony of Numbers; but in all these Respects, how much is he inferior to *Dryden*! — *Dryden* was the first who polished *English Verse*, and united Harmony and Strength; *Waller* was musical, but he was trifling; *Wilmot* was harmonious, but without Force. *Dryden* has more Ideas in
any

any the most trifling Page he ever wrote, than the poetical Works of all our Quality-Writers put together.—There is a Poverty of Thinking, a Languor of Expression, and an Indelicacy of Flow in *Roscommon*, and in *Dorset* not the least Appearance of Poetry.

The Cause of Wit has been little obliged to our Men of Quality; few, very few ever were born with a Genius, and fewer still have improved what they had from Nature. One cannot reflect without Indignation, that notwithstanding their general Dulness, the Incense of Praise should be offered up indiscriminately to those who have no Pretensions to it, but the fortuitous Advantage of Fortune, which in reality ought to confer no such Privilege.

May these Wits be Beggars for Life, who can descend to sordid Flattery, and bestow all the Virtues under the Sun upon a Block-head, merely because he is great, if Fortune can constitute Greatness. This is betraying the Dignity of Intellect, is a Treachery in the Cause of Wit, and whoever can be guilty of it, should be driven with Disgrace from human Society.

Wilmot

Wilmot, whose Character was that of a Libertine, did not scruple to descend to the Meanness of bribing all the Servants in *Rupert's* House: He had learned the Affair that had happened betwixt Earl *Meredith* and him, and by these Means found, that decoying his Mistress would be a Task of no great Difficulty. He convey'd Letters to her, in which he made use of no less a Name than that of his Majesty, and told her, that he was authoris'd to make Proposals from the King himself, who had frequently seen her, not without a secret Wish of a nearer Connection.

Whether this Representation was true or false, gave Miss no great Trouble; for at all Events she knew, it was but changing one Keeper for another; besides, she chose to gratify her Pride by abandoning Lord *Rupert*.

To the Place of Assignment she hasted, and there found that the Proposals from his Majesty were only mentioned as a Lure. *Wilmot* made genteel Offers, and would have sealed the Proposals by a legal Deed, or mutual Agreement, if Miss had insisted on it; but she was too penetrating not to know,
that

that People of his Character were to be bound by no other Authority than Caprice, and however they might promise, they would never fulfil Engagements from any other Principle than Inclination. Miss *Gwinn*, without further Ceremony, threw herself into his Arms, and appeared with him next Day at the Ring, and was carressed by his Lordship, not a little to the Mortification of *Rupert*, who witness'd first her Indifference, and then experienced her Revenge in openly laughing at him in the Arms of his hated Rival. She found but little Comfort in the Embraces of this fickle, luxurious, malicious Nobleman; at one Time he was all Fondness, Rapture, and Good-nature; at another Time sullen, discontented, and sometimes cruel; He was a Slave to every new Face, and at whatever Time he was disappointed or affronted abroad, he never failed to bring his Revenge home, and vent it in the bitterest Manner against all his Domestics; and, in these Fits, he did not spare even the Mistress of his Bosom.

Our Heroine, who was a great Admirer of Wit, and was born herself with no in-

considerable Share of it, possessed Good-nature and social Benevolence in the most eminent Degree. She could never suffer any one to want, whose Merit entitled them to Relief; and, in Point of Generosity, there were few Ladies then at Court, who had any Pretensions to be compared with her. Her Fault was a predominant Love of Pleasure, a Desire of shining in a conspicuous Sphere; but in recompence for Want of Chastity, she united as many private Virtues as any Character in her Time. She had heard one Day at the Play, that the eminent Poet, just mentioned, was in Distress, by reason of a Tragedy he had offered to the Stage, being, from some capricious Considerations of the Lord Chamberlain, rejected. She mentioned this Circumstance to *Wilmot*, and begged him to interpose his Interest, to have the Objections removed, and the Play brought upon the Stage; but in this Suit she was unsuccessful. So far from complying with it, he stirred himself to have *Dryden* discarded at Court, and recommended an obscure Man, one *Crown*, to write a Masque, to be represented before their Majesties: For which unnatural Act
of

of Malice, to one of the greatest Ornaments of the World, let his Name, like his Works, be for ever dedicated to Infamy.

The interrupted Tranquillity with which *Nell* lived with *Wilmot*, disposed her to think of him with Indifference; and indeed it cannot be deny'd, but, at certain Times, she indulged herself with her particular Favourites, and paid little Regard to the Consideration of Constancy to a Man who was himself incapable of it,

Sometimes he was whole Weeks without holding any Commerce with her, and introduced abandoned Creatures to her Acquaintance, at whom she had always an Aversion; and he only introduced them that he might mortify her, by taking them next Night into his Arms.

Tho' nothing can be more weak than to expect inviolable Fidelity from a Woman who is paid for Prostitution; yet surely those Men have no Pretensions to it, who do not so much as consider it as a good Quality, and give themselves no Trouble to observe the Appearance of Decency.

The Duchess of *Beau*, who was the reigning Toast of the Age, and, as few La-

dies of Quality are, was perfectly handsome, and in every Respect a compleat Beauty, became enamoured with Lord *Wilmot* : She saw with Concern, that notwithstanding his Indifference, and the Fickleness of his Temper, that he was more attached to Miss *Gwinn* than any other ; and how to produce an Alienation of his Affections to her, and settle them upon herself, was the important Point in Hand.

The Duchess of *Beau* was never very anxious about her Reputation ; she had been early a Favourite at Court, and grown giddy with the Influence of her Power, she fell from the Height of Chastity, and contented herself with the Share of Beauty Nature had given her, without much Trouble about exterior Decency, or internal Rectitude. She was endowed however with a sprightly Genius ; her Wit was flashy, and darted on the Mind with as much Force as her Eyes beamed upon a Lover ; and she added to Nature a great deal of fashionable Reading. She had long indulged this Passion for *Wilmot*, and a Coincidence of Genius and Manner of Thinking increased the Flame.

What

What Artifices will not a Woman practise to engage the Man she loves ! What Schemes is she not capable of executing ! What a Variety of Dangers will she encounter !

The Artifice the Duchess fell upon to shake *Wilmot's* Affection for *Nell*, was something singular enough. She had a Brother who tenderly loved her, who was one of the Beaux Esprits of the Time, and who had performed many Feats in Gallantry. To this Brother she made Application, in an oblique Way, and artfully represented the superior Charms and sparkling Wit of Lord *Wilmot's* Mistress ; and gave him to understand, that it would not require much Sollicitation to make a Conquest of her.

The Brother, who was too well acquainted with his Sister's Inclinations, and at no Loss to construe her Meaning, set about the Execution of her Scheme with the utmost Vigour, animated from a Principle of Pride, as well as a Willingness to promote a Match, if possible, betwixt his Sister and *Wilmot* ; for the Duchess of *Beau* was then a Widow. He had frequent Interviews with

with Miss *Gwinn*, and it requires no great Faith to believe their Interviews were not altogether without Business.

He wrote to her frequently, and had his Letters convey'd in such a Manner, that they might fall into *Wilmot's* Hand: For raising his Jealousy, and consequently promoting a Quarrel betwix them, was the Point he had in view; but by some Means or other, they either never fell into his Hand, or made no Impression on him if they did. He had learned, by one of *Wilmot's* Domesticks, the Name of a Place to which his Master used frequently to retire with a new Favourite, which was no other than a House of Intrigue, where fashionable Personages in those Days were accustomed to carry their *Dulcineas*.

To this Place did this young Nobleman retire with *Nell Gwinn*, at the very Time when *Wilmot*, with his Mistress, was expected; and so situated himself, that whoever should enter the House, must necessarily observe them. According to his Wish it fell out; for when he was regaling himself with *Nell* over a Bottle, his Lordship entered, and tripping up Stairs to his usual Apartment, he stared them full in the Face.

The

The young Nobleman, who feigned Surprise, started from his Seat. My Lord, says he, I know I have incurred your Displeasure, by thus endeavouring to seduce your Mistress; I own it, and am ready to give you the Satisfaction of a Gentleman. The Lady shall not be injured on my Account. You may command me, my Lord; I am ready to answer in the Field of Honour. And upon uttering this Expression, he laid his Hand upon his Sword, and put on a Look of Defiance.

This Conduct of the young Nobleman's so terrify'd *Wilmot*, who was a natural as well as a speculative Coward, that he remained some Time without answering a Word. At last, when he had a little recovered himself, he reply'd, Possess her, and welcome, my Lord; I shall never fight for a Whore; take her home, my Lord; henceforth let her be your's: I have no Pretensions to her; she has not my Heart, and shall have no more of my Purse. Much Good may you have of your Bargain.

The Affair thus amicably decided, the Parties retired, *Nell* with her new Lover, and *Wilmot* with his Mistress. But as all
Cowards

Cowards are naturally cruel, so all Cowards are more or less malicious. *Wilmot* began now to prosecute his Resentment in Writing; and as he did not care to engage at the Sword, he handled his Pen, and wrote Satires against *Nell*; some of whom are scattered in his Works, and give Indications of the keenest Resentment.

But tho' the young Nobleman had succeeded in procuring a Mistress, the Duchess had not as yet made any Progress with *Wilmot*; nor by means of this Scheme was a Bit the more likely to succeed.

The Duchess of *Beau* had all along mistaken *Wilmot's* Character. She imagined him so much the Slave of his Passions, particularly that of Love, that a Beauty need only appear before him, and captivate: But far otherwise was his real Character. His Love had its Foundation in an Appetite, unworthy to be the Basis of a pure Flame. Gratifications of the most sensual Sort were the Business of his Life; and he never gave himself much Trouble in Courtship: For this Reason he made but very faint Attacks upon the Duchess; for tho' he could not but perceive her growing Inclinations for him,

him, yet he had not Penetration enough to see that the Conquest would have been easy: In this languid indifferent Situation did they live towards one another, till the Duchess's Hopes were entirely blasted by *Wilmot's* Fall at Court, and the King's immediate Commands to have him banished; for such was the Malevolence of his Heart, that the best-natured Monarch in the World could not escape his Satire and wicked Libels.

His Lordship then took upon him the Character of a Mountebank and travelled the Country as a Quack Doctor; in which Station his Lordship often declared, that he acquired more Knowledge of the World, more of the Workings of the human Heart, more of the Motives of Action, and various Manners of Life, in that short Space, than he had ever done at Court, where all wear Masques, and Nature, as it is, is never display'd.

But while Disgrace and Infamy are thus heaped upon the Head of *Wilmot*, a Preferment and Renown are in waiting for his old Mistress.

The Duchess of *Beau* had been early a Favourite with King *Charles* the Second,

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who

who was undoubtedly the most amorous Monarch, one excepted, that ever filled the *English* Throne. As he was fond of the Duchess, so he was likewise fond of her Brother, and frequently did him the Honour of a personal Visit; but the young Nobleman, well acquainted with the King's Disposition, took care, that he should never, on these Occasions, lay his Eyes on *Nell Gwinn*.

One Day however, in spite of his Caution, his Majesty saw her, and that very Night possessed her. Her Lover carried her to the Play, at a Time when he had not the least Suspicion of his Majesty's being there; but as that Monarch had an Aversion to his Robes of Royalty, and was incumbered with the Dignity of his State, he chose frequently to throw off the Load of Kingship, and consider himself as a private Gentleman.

Upon this Occasion he came to the Play, *incog.* and sat in the next Box to *Nell* and her Lover. As soon as the Play was finished, his Majesty, with the Duke of *York*, the young Nobleman, and *Nell*, retired to a Tavern together, where they regaled themselves over a Bottle, and the King shewed such

such Civilities to *Nell* that she began to understand the Meaning of his Gallantry.

The Tavern-keeper was entirely ignorant of the Quality of the Company ; and and it was remarkable, that when the Reckoning came to be paid, his Majesty, upon searching his Pockets, found that he had not Money enough about him to discharge it, and asked the Sum of his Brother, who was in the same Situation : Upon which *Nell* observed, that she had got into the poorest Company that ever she was in at a Tavern. The Reckoning was paid by the young Nobleman, who, that Night, parted both with his Money and Mistress.—Such were the Gradations, by which this celebrated Courtesan rose to the Eminence of an Imperial Mistress ; and in that Situation it must be owned, of all this Prince's Favourites, she was both the most prolific and the least offensive to the jarring Interests of the Court, or Country. She observed an Evenness of Conduct, and behaved with so much Mildness, that none were her Enemies who were Friends to the King ; and none ever libelled her, but the malevolent Lord *Wilmot*.

No sooner had she rose to this high Station, but her Heart, naturally benevolent, overflowed in a Flood of Kindness to distressed Merit.

The celebrated Author of *Hudibras* had been long a Favourite at Court; he wrote a Poem which so exquisitely pleased *Charles the Second*, that he carried it always in his Pocket, and used to quote it almost on every Occasion. Yet, as it was an habitual Maxim of his, never to think twice of one Thing, nor regard his Promise, except when it was to promote some Scheme of Pleasure, he forgot the Indigence of the Author, while he was in Raptures with his Poem; and tho', in the early Part of his Life, he was educated in the School of Distress, yet he did not, in his Prosperity, retain the least Remembrance of the pungent Gripes of Poverty. If he had a Moment reflected on the Cravings of Hunger, which he himself must have felt in the Royal Oak, the Fatigue and Terror he underwent when flying from the Persecution of an infamous Rebellion, he would naturally have relieved a Poet from the Insolence of persecuting Creditors, who pay no Regard

gard to any Species of Merit, and raised him from the abject Situation of a starving Wit.

In behalf of this Gentleman, *Nell* frequently remonstrated, and represented his Story and Circumstances with the utmost Warmth to his Majesty. In the immediate Hours of her Ministry, she often mentioned him, but was still so unlucky as to be unsuccessful. — Firmly resolved to serve Mr. *Butler*, for whose inimitable Wit she had the greatest Veneration, she applied to Duke *Villiers*, who then was at the Head of Taste, and was capable independent of his Majesty's Interest, to provide for him : After long Solicitation, she prevailed on his Grace to grant an Interview to Mr. *Butler*, and on Mr. *Wycherly*, who was a Favourite with the Duke, to introduce him. Mr. *Wycherly*, who was well acquainted with the great Merit, as well as Distress, of *Butler*, readily embraced the first Opportunity of promoting his Friend.

They at last had a Meeting, and as *Butler* was a great Master of Conversation, and had a most engaging Address, tho' much embarrassed by Modesty, so upon that Occasion
he

he remarkably exerted himself. The Conversation was brilliant, and the critical Moment approaching when Mr. *Wycherly* intended to address the Duke in his Friend's Behalf, their Hopes were dashed to Pieces at once, by the Duke's suddenly departing the Room, in consequence of having seen a Pimp of his trip by with a Brace of Females he had secured for his Grace's Pleasure.

This infamous Creature was a Baronet, devoted as a Minister to Duke *Villier's* Appetite, and by an untimely Appearance at this Tavern, was the Occasion of breaking off his Master's Interview with *Butler*; by which the poor Man continued in Indigence, and went down to the Grave under the Load of Poverty. One cannot upon this Occasion forbear considering the Conduct of this generous Courtesan, in contradistinction to that paltry Wretch who threw Disgrace upon his Title, by submitting to the most servile Baseness, to which a human Creature can possibly sink.

Another Act of Generosity, which raised the Character of this Lady above any Courtesan in those or any other Times, was,
her

her Solicitude to effect the Institution of the *Chelfea* Hospital. One Day, when she was rolling about Town in her Coach, a poor Man came to the Coach-door solliciting Charity, who told her a Story (whether true or false is immaterial) of his having been wounded in the Civil Wars, in defence of the Royal Cause; this Circumstance greatly affected the benevolent Heart of Miss *Gwinn*; she considered, that besides the Hardship of those being exposed to Beggary, by Wounds received in defence of their Country, that it seemed to be the most monstrous Ingratitude in the Government to suffer those to perish who stood in their Defence, and screened them from the most hazardous Attempts of Patriotism.

Warm with these Reflections, and in the Overflow of Pity, she hurried to the King, and represented the Misery in which she had found an old Servant, and entreated that he might suffer some Scheme to be proposed to him, towards supporting those unfortunate Sons of Valour, whose old Age, Wounds, or Infirmities, render'd them unfit for Service, so that they might not close their Days
with

with Repinings against Fortune, and be oppressed with the Misery of Want.

This Observation she communicated to Personages of Distinction, who were publick-spirited enough to encourage it; and to *Nell Gwinn* is now owing the comfortable Provision which is made for decayed Soldiers, and that agreeable Retreat they find at *Chelsea*.

This celebrated Lady, notwithstanding her unexpected Rise and Exaltation, never once betray'd the least Pride or Insolence towards her Inferiors, nor ever desired to be looked upon with more Reverence on account of her lying in the Arms of a Monarch.

One Day, as she was driving in a Coach to *Whiteball*, her Coachman, who refused to give Way to another Coach, in which was a Lady of Quality, engaged in a Quarrel with his Brother Driver, who had the Assurance to tell his Antagonist, that there was a great Difference betwixt them, for that he had the Honour to drive a Countess, while his Lady was neither more nor less than a *Whore*: Upon this insolent Behaviour, *Nell's* Coachman heartily belaboured the Fellow,
and

and taught him to his Experience, to polish his Stile. When *Nell* inquired at the Coachman the Cause of the Quarrel, the Fellow bluntly answered, Because, Madam, he called you a Whore.—Go, you Blockhead, says she ; never fight again in such a Cause, nor risk your Carcase but in the Defence of Truth.

This frank Declaration to her Coachman cannot, I think, be accounted glorying in her Wickedness ; for however she might be convinced, that the Character of a Wife is more honourable than that of a Mistress yet she knew it was in vain for her to give herself Airs, for all the World already knew the Sphere in which she moved.

When *Nell* communicated this Story to his Majesty, he laughed very heartily, and said, Oddsfish, (a cant Phrase often used by that merry Monarch) I find, *Nell*, thee'rt not ashamed of thy Profession. *Nell* took then an Opportunity of recommending her Coachman to a Place ; in which she succeeded ; and this is perhaps the first Instance of any Advantage that ever was got by fighting for a Woman.

H

Of

Of all King *Charles's* Mistresses, *Nell* was undoubtedly the least offensive to the contending Parties; she never engaged in any Disputes; she raised no Enemies by her Ambition, and lost no Friends by her Insolence; so far was she from drawing aside the King from an Attention to his Affairs, that she often excited him to Diligence; and in the Hours of Dalliance would drop a Hint, that if ever he should fall into Distress, he might thank his Ladies for it. One Day when he had been struggling in the Council, and torn to Pieces by the Multiplicity of Petitions presented to him for Redress, the outrageous Behaviour of the Ministers, and the fierce Contentions of the Parliament, he retired into *Nell's* Apartment very pensive, and seemed entirely under the Influence of Grief: She took the Liberty to ask his Majesty the Cause of his Disorder:—O *Nell*! says he, what shall I do to please the People of *England*? I am torn to Pieces by their Clamours. If it please your Majesty, says she, there is but one Way left, which Expedient I am afraid it will be difficult to persuade you to embrace. What is that? says his Majesty, in a Tone that denoted Curiosity.—
Dismiss

Dismiss your Ladies, may it please your Majesty, and mind your Business; the People of *England* will soon be pleased.

This Observation, the Truth of which the King could not but acknowledge, struck him; but, as *Nell* conjectured, so it fell out; for he never in his Life had Resolution enough to discharge one Mistress, however troublesome to the Nation, or expensive to himself. This good-natur'd Prince was never more delighted than to have Truth told him in a pleasing facetious Manner; and as *Nell* was sensible of this, she fell upon a Number of Expedients to divert him, and at the same time put him in mind of his Affairs.

During the Troubles that were raised by his Son *Monmouth's* Quarrel with the Duke of *York*, his Majesty, who loved both his Brother and Son with the utmost Tenderness, behaved with so much Indifference and Negligence in that Business, that it was with great Difficulty he could be persuaded to attend the Council, or dispatch any Affairs whatever.

One Day when the Council had met, and waited long for his Majesty's Appear-

ance, one of the Lords came to the Apartment of the King, but was refused Admittance; he complained to *Nell* of this unsufferable Dilatoriness, upon which she laid a Wager with the Nobleman, of a hundred Pounds, that, that very Evening she should fall upon a Scheme that would bring him to the Council: — She sent for *Killegrew*, a Character so well known in those Times, that none of our Readers can be ignorant of his Station; and desired him to dress himself in Boots, and in every Respect as if he was going a Journey, and enter the King's Apartment without Ceremony. *Killegrew* immediately engaged into her Scheme, equipped himself, and entered the Apartment. As soon as his Majesty saw him, What, *Killegrew*! are you mad? why, where are you going? Did not I order, that no body should disturb me? I don't mind your Orders, not I, says *Killegrew*; and I am going as fast as I can. — Why, where, says his Majesty? where are you going? Going, why, to Hell, says *Killegrew*. To Hell! and what to do there? says his Majesty. To fetch up *Oliver Cromwell* from thence, says

says he, to take some Care of the national Concerns, for I am sure your Majesty takes none.

This Expedient, concerted by *Nell Gwinn*, and executed by *Killegrew*, had the desired Effect; for he immediately went to the Council, and, as long as he could bear the Badges of Royalty, continued with them.

This Prince, of all our *British* Monarchs, had the least of a King in his Nature; nothing gave him so much Pain as to be obliged, for a few Hours, to wear the Robes of Regality: They sat uneasy upon him, and he was too much the finished Gentleman to support the unnatural Stiffness and Dignity which those vested with sovereign Authority in Prudence should support. In this Particular he differed much from his Father, as well as in almost every other Point of kingly or moral Character. His Father, as Lord *Clarendon* observes, kept State to the utmost; he was not to be approached without Ceremony, and seldom condescended to any Freedom even with his Favourites; his Father was in his moral Character perfectly chaste; so great an
Ob-

Observer and Lover of conjugal Fidelity, says his Lordship, that when he found the opposite Vices in any Personages about Court, if he did not use the Freedom to reprove them, he at least dismissed them from his Service. How opposite to this was the Character of his Son; luxurious, easy, indifferent, and heedless? He was born with as great Abilities as his Father, but wanted his Diligence, his Patience, his Intrepidity. He possessed a graceful Person, and was so much Master of Politeness, that he could please a Petitioner more in refusing a Favour than his Father could in granting it. His Father did every thing as a King, he did every thing as a private Gentleman, and could put on so complacent a Countenance, and an Air so courtly and engaging, that it was impossible to approach him without loving him.

Of all the Tricks that was practised upon this merry Prince by this facetious Courtesan, the following is one of the most extraordinary. She had by some Means got Notice, that his Majesty intended to go out with some of his Favourites at Court, in the Character of a private Gentleman, on a rejoicing

joining Night, to reconnoitre the Houses of Pleasure, and to see Life as it really is, without Grimace or Disguise. The Brother to the Duchess of *Beau*, with whom she still lived in Friendship, tho' not in Pleasure, was to be one of the Party. She applied to him to put in practice an Expedient, which she imagined would for ever cure his Majesty of any further nocturnal Ambulations. His Lordship consented, and communicated the Proposal to the other Personages who were to attend him in this Expedition, who all readily agreed to it.

The appointed Night came, and away they steered their Course to one of the most noted Houses of Intrigue in Town; one of the Party provided some acute Girls, who were no Strangers to the Town, and well instructed in their Professions; he told them, that they need be under no Alarm of Danger, but, if possible, to pick the King's Pocket of all the Money he had about him; and, as soon as Dalliance was over, to come away and leave him. This they all agreed to; and tho' they were not let into the Secret, that their Paramour was to be the King,

King, yet they were all anxious to be the chosen Girl with whom this Personage was to intrigue. The one his Majesty pitched upon, was luckily the best qualified for the Purpose; and while he was indulging himself unreservedly with her; she, by a happy Execution, stript him of his Money, and, as soon as possible, retired: The rest of the Noblemen the mean while deserted him; and his Majesty, for some Hours, waited their Return with Patience, which, at last, however, was quite exhausted.— He called to pay, but what was his Dilemma when upon searching his Pockets, he found his Money gone, he called up the Landlord, and told him his Misfortune; that one of the young Ladies with whom he had been concerned, had effectually eased him of his Money; and that he could not possibly pay him. He remonstrated with the Landlord in this Manner, but in vain: He would hear no Reason; he told him he had been frequently bilked under such Pretences; that he would have his Money; and that he should not stir a Foot out of his House till it was paid.

This

This Obstinacy reduced the King to an Extremity ; he knew not what to do ; to discover himself, he knew, would be imprudent and ineffectual, for the Fellow would not believe it. Thus bullied by a notorious Bawdyhouse-keeper stood the *British* Monarch, perhaps in as great Distress, however comical, as ever he was in his Life.

Driven to the last Shift, he offered to the Landlord to leave a Ring in pledge for the Reckoning, who told him, that he was no Judge of Rings ; that it being late, no Jeweller was up ; and that he would have his Money. His Majesty again-urged him to knock up some Jeweller to examine the Ring, and at last prevailed on the Russian to do so.

No sooner did the Jeweller lay Eyes on it, but he started, seemingly much alarmed, and asked him who he had got in his House, for that no Person but one in the Nation could afford to wear so rich a one. I don't know who he is, not I ; answered the Bully ; he's a tall black ugly looking Son of a B—— who has got no Money

in his Pocket, and has offered this Ring in pledge for his Reckoning.

Hold your Chat, says the Jeweller, that Person must be the King. Excited by Curiosity, the Jeweller accompanied the Bully to the House, to satisfy himself as to the Owner of the Ring; and as soon as he came into his Majesty's Presence, he fell down on his Knees; for he knew his Majesty.

The Bully upon this, cooled in his Courage, and asked his Majesty a thousand Pardons, who far from insulting him, facetiously asked him, whether the Ring would not bear another Bottle. The Joke thus ended, and the King went Home, but ever after bore some Resentment towards the young Nobleman, who had reduced him to that dangerous Dilemma.

He found out by some means or other, that the whole was a Plot of *Nell Gwinn's*, and that she alone was the Contriver of the Scheme. He called her into his Presence upon hearing this, with a Resolution to discover his Anger to her, for so bold an Act of Imprudence; but he had scarce mentioned the Affair, till his Resentment
was

was disarmed by her Repartees, and the irresistible Eloquence of her Eyes; for as he loved a Joke of all things in the World, so he was more disposed to bear it from a Mistress he doated on, than any other.

That *Nell Gwinn* was faithful to His Majesty during the Time she lived with him, cannot, I think, be doubted, if it is considered, that she was of all his Mistresses the most prolifick, which seldom happens to be the Case with those who wantonly indulge themselves in Prostitution with every handsome Fellow that comes in their Way; and that all Writers of that Age, who have mentioned this Courtezan, have not charged her with a Breach of it; a Circumstance which Malice, and Ill-nature would not have omitted, if there had been any Foundation for the Charge.

That His Majesty had a Regard for *Nell Gwinn*, appears strongly in his last Moments, when he desired his Brother not to let poor *Nell* starve.

After the Death of His Majesty, *Nell* fell into Obscurity; the Bustle at Court, the political Cabals, the Contention betwixt the Popish and Protestant Interests, quite engaged

engaged the Attention of the Publick, and drew it from such Subjects as *Nell*.

For the Remainder of her Life, she lived in Retirement, and in that Situation there is no Account of her Behaviour.

She was a Lady of distinguished Talents: she united Wit, Beauty and Benevolence, and if she deserves Blame for want of Chastity, there are few who challenge such lavish Encomiums for other moral Qualities.



F I N I S

